

Message Text

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AMCONSUL NAHA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: MINOBE'S DECISION TO QUIT THE RACE

REF: TOKYO 1988

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: MINOBE'S DECISION AGAINST SEEKING REELECTION AS GOVERNOR OF TOKYO, APPARENTLY DESIGNED AS TACTIC TO FOSTER UNITY BETWEEN JSP AND JCP, HAS INSTEAD DRAMATIZED DEPTH OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO LEFTIST PARTIES. ALTHOUGH COMPROMISE STILL POSSIBLE, CURRENT BETTING IS THAT EFFORTS BY MINOBE SUPPORTERS TO RECONCILE JSP-JCP DIFFERENCES AND PERSUADE GOVERNOR TO RUN AGAIN ARE NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED. IF SO, PROSPECTS ARE BRIGHT FOR VICTORY BY SHINTARO ISHIHARA, LDP MEMBER PLANNING TO RUN AS INDEPENDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE REFORMIST CAMP HAS BEEN IN A MAJOR CRISIS SINCE MINOBE'S SUDDEN DECISION FEBRUARY 16 (REFTEL) NOT TO SEEK A THIRD TERM IN PARLIAM. HIS SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN FRANTICALLY SEEKING A JSP-JCP RECONCILIATION IN ORDER TO PERSUADE HIM TO CHANGE HIS MIND, BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MAKE MUCH HEADWAY. ACCORDING TO PRESS, THEY WILL CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS UNTIL FEBRUARY 24, THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DATE MINOBE'S CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION, THE ASSOCIATION FOR A CLEAN

PROGRESSIVE TOKYO GOVERNMENT, IS SCHEDULED TO MEET FOR A SHOWDOWN ON MINOBE'S CANDIDACY.

2. MINOBE'S IMMEDIATE PROBLEM HAS BEEN HIS INABILITY TO END THE JSP-JCP POWER STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE "DOWA" (ASSIMILATION) PROGRAM FOR THE "BURAKUMIN" (OUTCASTE) COMMUNITY IN TOKYO. NUMBERING 400,000 SOULS IN TOKYO (3 MILLION NATION-WIDE), THE COMMUNITY IS DIVIDED INTO THE JSP-AFFILIATED LIBERATION LEAGUE (KAIHO DOMEI) AND THE MUCH SMALLER JCP AFFILIATED LIASON COUNCIL TO REFORM THE LIBERATION LEAGUE. WITH CONSIDERABLE JUSTIFICATION, THE JCP HAS CHARGED THAT SINCE MINOBE CAME TO POWER EIGHT YEARS AGO, HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS FAVORED ONLY THE LIBERATION LEAGUE BY PROVIDING IT WITH OPERATING FUNDS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES. THE ADMINISTRATION DID, HOWEVER ADMINISTER ITS WELFARE LAON PROGRAM FOR BURAKUMIN FAMILIES (\$960,000 PER ANNUM) WITH AN EVEN HAND. PRIOR TO RECEIVING ANY LOANS, APPLICANTS HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO ATTEND BRIEFING SESSIONS ON LOAN PROCEDURES. HOWEVER, AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE LIBERATION LEAGUE IN MID-1974, THE MINOBE ADMINISTRATION AGREED TO HAVE LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES SPEAK AT THE BRIEFINGS ON THE MEANING OF DISCRIMINATION IN JAPAN. THE JCP, CHARGING THAT SUCH MEETINGS HAVE BECOME NOTHING MORE THAN "BRAIN WASHING" SESSIONS FOR THE LEAGUE, DEMANDED THAT LEAGUE PARTICIPATION BE STOPPED AND THE SESSIONS BE RETURNED TO THEIR FORMER FUNCTION OF PROVIDING ONLY PROCEDURAL GUIDANCE. IN NOVEMBER 1974, THE JCP SAID THAT IT WOULD NOT SUPPORT MINOBE IN PARIL UNLESS THIS WAS DONE. MINOBE, VALUING JSP-SOHYO SUPPORT FAR MORE THAN JCP SUPPORT, STOOD HIS GROUND AGAINST THE JCP.

3 IN JANUARY, HOWEVER, A GROUP OF SIX PROMINENT INTELLECTUALS LED BY TOSHIO NAKANO, APPARENTLY ALARMED BY LDP MOVES TO FIELD POPULAR VOTE-GETTER SHINTARO ISHIHARA AGAINST MINOBE, URGED MINOBE TO REACH A COMPROMISE WITH JCP. THE LATTER REFUSED TO SOW ANY FLEXIBILITY. AFTER SEVERAL ABORTIVE ATTEMPTS BY THIRD PARTIES TO EFFECT A COMPROMISE, THE NAKANO GROUP FINALLY GOT MINOBE TO AGREE TO A SOLUTION LARGELY INCORPORATING THE JCP DEMANDS AND, ACCORDING TO "AKAHATA" TO HAVE THIS AIDES DRAFT A MEMORANDUM ON THE MATTER. JCP READILY ACCEPTED THE MEMORANDUM ON FEBRUARY 14, BUT THE LIBERATION LEAGUE (AND POSSIBLY THE JSP) REJECTED IT. MINOBE THEN CONSULTED WITH HIS MENTOR, RETIRED ECONOMIST HYOHEI OUCHI, WHO ADVISED HIM TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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QUIT. THEN ANNOUNCED HIS WITHDRAWAL AT AN ELABORATELY STAGED PRESS CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 16.

4. FOREGOING ARE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MINOBE'S DECISION TO QUIT, BUT THE PRESS HAS BEEN FILLED SINCE WITH SPECULATION ON OTHER REASONS FOR HIS MOVE. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT MINOBE HAS USED THE "DOWA" ISSUE AS AN EXCUSE FOR QUITTING BECAUSE OF THE CRITICAL FINANCIAL PROBLEMS FACING THE TOKYO

GOVERNMENT. (FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOVERNMENT HAS DEFICIT BUDGET NEXT YEAR, AND EMPLOYEES HAVE NOT RECEIVED TWO-THIRDS OF THEIR PAY RAISE FOR 1974.) OTHERS SEE MINOBE'S WITHDRAWAL AS HIS DESPERATE PLOY TO BRING THE JSP AND JCP TOGETHER SINCE WITHOUT JOINT SUPPORT HE WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE ONLY AN EVEN CHANCE OF BEATING ISHIRA. STILL OTHERS SEE IT HAS MINOBE'S ONLY RECIPE TO THE CEDAMANAT STAND TAKEN BY THE JCP. THEY BELIEVE THAT THE JCP IS INTENT UPON ELIMINATING MINOBE IN ORDER TO END THE POLITICAL INFLUENCE OF HIS ANTI-JCP "BRAIN-TRUST." IT IS MADE UP OF REPORTEDLY HARLINE MARXIST-LENINIST ECONOMISTS, SUCH AS OUCHI AND PROFESSOR MASATAKA SAKISAKA.

5. WHILE LEAVING THE DOOR OPEN FOR A POSSIBLE RECONCILIATION BY MINOBE, OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE AT THE SAME TIME CANVASSING FOR REPLACEMENT. A KOMEI TO SOURCE TOLD US THAT HIS PARTY AND CERTAIN JSP ELEMENTS FAVOR EITHER TOKYO VICE GOVERNOR MISUO ISOMURA OR HIS BROTHER, EIICHI ISOMURA, AN ACADEMICIAN ALSO MENTIONED BY THE PRESS AS LIKELY PROSPECTS ARE DIETMAN HIDEO DEN (JSP) AND DIETMAN ZEMMEI MATSUMOTO (JCP).

6. COMMENT THE IMMEDIATE ISSUE BETWEEN JCP AND JSP-- WHETHER OR NOT LIBERATION LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVES MAY SPEAK AT BRIEFING SESSIONS FOR LOAN APPLICATIONS -- IS, AT FIRST BLUSH, TRIVIAL. BUT IT BROUGHT TO A HEAD A LONGSTANDING CONFLICT WITHIN THE BURAKUMIN COMMUNITY BETWEEN THE LIBERATION LEAGUE AND LIASOIN COUNCIL. THIS IS, IN TURN, BUT A SMALL PART OF AN INCREASINGLY AGGRIMONIOUS POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE JSP AND JCP. THE STRUGGLE HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE IN AREAS SUCH AS TOKYO, OSAKA, AND CHIBA IN WHICH THE JCP HAS MADE MAJOR GAINS IN RECENT YEARS, MAINLY AT THE EXPENSE OF THE JSP.

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7. MINOBE'S WITHDRAWAL HAS DRAMATIZED THE DEPTH OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO LEFTIST PARTIES AND SHARPLY DIVIDED THE JSP ITSELF. ALTHOUGH COMPROMISE IS STILL POSSIBLE, CURRENT BETTING IS THAT EFFORTS BY MINOBE'S SUPPORTERS AND ELEMENTS WITHIN THE JSP TO BREAK THE IMPASSE ON THE DOWA PROBLEM AND PERSUADE THE GOVERNOR TO CHANGE HIS MIND ARE NOT LIKELY TO SUCCEED. EVEN IF MINOBE WERE TO RUN AGAIN, HIS CREDENTIALS AS A REFORMIST STANDARD-BEARER AND A WINNER WILL HAVE BEEN BADLY TARNISHED, PERHAPS FATAALLY. IF SO, PROSPECTS ARE BRIGHT FOR SHINTARO ISHIHARA, LDP MEMBER RUNNING AS AN INDEPENDENT. HODGSON

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